

# FEMINIST AGREEMENTS AND DEMANDS

**The Nordic women's movements final  
document of Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014  
– New Action on Women's Rights**



# Introduction

**The Fourth UN World Conference** on Women was held in Beijing in 1995. At that time, member state governments adopted the Beijing Platform for Action. Work by the women's global movement and its strong desire to reach agreements were prerequisites for the adoption of the Platform for Action. The governments that signed the twelve articles of the Platform for Action undertook to implement the CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, by conducting active and visible work.

There has not been a World Conference on Women's Rights since 1995. Voices have been raised for a new conference, but there are also concerns of a potential backlash if the Platform for Action were to be renegotiated. There is a lack of international progress. An example of this is that UN member states could not reach common conclusions in 2012, at the Commission on the Status of Women, CSW. Other examples are the watered-down text on women's empowerment and gender equality in the final document from Rio +20 and that the Millennium Development Goals that are furthest from being achieved are those involving women and gender equality.

All over the world, women's rights are questioned and restricted with reference to traditions, religions and cultures. Principles of universal rights and democracy are called into question. Economic, environmental and political crises have repeatedly been shown to have the most negative impact on women, especially poor women, while women have been excluded from decision-making that led to the crises.

The Nordic countries are also facing major policy challenges to achieve gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action formulates clear demands, which the Nordic countries still do not live up to. There are major short-

comings in areas such as violence against women, labour market conditions and equal pay, women's economic independence, organising and sharing of care work and women's influence and empowerment.

Women's right to development, full participation in democratic decision-making, nationally and internationally, in times of peace or conflict, improved personal income, adequate working conditions, less unpaid work, the elimination of oppressive stereotypes, freedom from violence, the right to health and to decide over one's own body, childbirth and sexuality are all highly relevant issues that require specific actions. It is imperative that each government upholds previous commitments and shows how it is tackling gender equality policy challenges. Women's rights and gender equality are prerequisites for global sustainable development goals.

The women's movement has its roots in women reacting against injustice and oppression. Individual women and groups of women have different living conditions, experience different forms of discrimination and have thus prioritised different goals on their feminist agenda. Despite these differences, we unite in a collective struggle for women's rights and gender equal societies..

# Goals of Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014

## **NORDISKT FORUM MALMÖ 2014 – NEW ACTION ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AIMS TO:**

- \* **Formulate demands and specific proposals directed at the Nordic governments and politicians involved in gender politics of the future.**
- \* **Build commitment and understanding for the gender equality policy challenges and opportunities within the region.**
- \* **Promote and develop the Nordic debate on women's rights, locally, regionally and globally.**
- \* **Build networks for the exchange of experiences between activists, researchers, organisations, government agencies, industry and the public at large.**
- \* **Provide information on the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Formulate recommendations on future strategies for gender-sensitive sustainable development and the global agenda to replace the UN Millennium Development Goals through the post-2015 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, SDG.**

## **The 12 themes of the final document**

The demands formulated in this final document are based on the themes of Nordiskt Forum, which in turn builds on the Beijing Platform for Action. The demands are directed first and foremost to the Nordic governments and politicians, but also towards authorities, institutions, employer organisations, trade unions, municipalities and private enterprises and to the Nordic feminist movement.

## **Demands directed to the Nordic governments**

We the participants at Nordiskt Forum invite all the Nordic governments to implement the recommendations and demands formulated in the final document of Nordiskt Forum. We recall the commitments made at the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action. At that time, the governments guaranteed the full implementation of human rights for women and girls as an undeniable and indivisible part of human rights and undertook to incorporate a gender perspective in all policies and programs. We stress that women's groups and networks were singled out as particularly important for the effective implementation of the Platform for Action.

## **Definition of discrimination**

Nordiskt Forum recalls the first article of the CEDAW. Discrimination against women is defined as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition or exercise of women's human rights and fundamental freedoms. Nordiskt Forum also recalls that human rights are individual, universal, indivisible and non-hierarchical.

# 1. Feminist economy – economic and social development

**The strategic objectives** on women and the economy in the Beijing Platform for Action are still an important basis for action in the Nordic region and globally. We need profound knowledge and more research on how macroeconomic principles and structures sustain inequality and how these could be adjusted to include gender equality in order to create a fair and sustainable society.

Models that are based on feminist economics and research consider both women's and men's daily lives and different living conditions, leading to a society which priorities the importance of reproduction and care functions in the welfare society. International institutions and economic networks emphasise gender equality as a determining factor for good economic and social development. Despite this, obsolete economic models are applied, which in many cases lead to policies that risk increasing gender inequality in society. It is a political challenge to expose and modify the structures that value differently women's and men's life experiences and contributions to the society.

Poverty has different meanings in different countries, but women are over-represented among the poor everywhere in the world. Even in the Nordic countries, there are more women living in economic vulnerability than men. Certain groups of women and girls are particularly vulnerable. In the last few years of economic crisis, large groups of women have suffered the consequences of cut-downs when employment opportunities have disappeared and welfare services have been reduced.

The Beijing Platform for Action states that all economic policies must be gender mainstreamed. This is a very important tool to increase economic equality with a direct impact on social development. Time has come for the Nordic governments to live up to their commitments.

## **WE DEMAND THAT:**

- \* **The Nordic countries' national budgets, as well as local and regional governments' budgets be gender-mainstreamed, so that the gender perspective is visible in financial documents and decisions, and that gender equality policy goals are systematically followed up and used as a basis for new measures, and are included in the post-2015 agenda.**
- \* **The Nordic authorities promote women's economic independence and rights, including access to paid work and satisfactory working conditions, and observe the specific needs of vulnerable groups.**
- \* **The Nordic governments implement tangible measures and follow up the work to reduce income differences between women and men.**
- \* **Unpaid care work be made visible and reflected in economic models and taken into account in socio-economic planning.**
- \* **Global economic crises be analysed from a gender perspective both in terms of causes and consequences and that welfare services be maintained to protect women's economic independence.**

## 2. Women's and girls' bodies – sexuality, health and reproductive rights

**The significance of sex and gender** on health, disease and treatment is well known. Yet the Nordic countries are far from gender equal in the provision of health services for women and men when it comes to the diagnosis, investigation, treatment and monitoring of disease.

There is a need to draw attention to the fact that women's health is more than diseases connected to the reproductive organs. Diseases such as rheumatism and joint injuries affect more women than men and receive comparatively limited resources, considering their prevalence in society and the suffering of the individual. Moreover, greater attention, good knowledge and a regulatory framework are required to guarantee women's access to prevention and treatment of women's health disorders. The requirement of a widespread gender perspective in all health care interventions is not respected. Women are given fewer, less expensive and more belated interventions compared to men.

Physical integrity is of utmost importance for women's health, albeit a controversial issue. Women's right to decide over their own bodies, sexuality, pregnancies and free access to contraception and abortion are the cornerstones of a gender equal society. Bans on abortions do not lead to fewer abortions, but rather to more risky ones. The objectification of women, the society's sexualisation and unreasonable performance expectations all impact on women's mental health and cause eating disorders and other forms of self-inflicted injury. There is also a need for more gender-specific research on and knowledge about health issues that take into account other variables such as age, class, and sexual orientation as well as targeted interventions for vulnerable groups in order to achieve an equivalent health care for all.

Nordiskt Forum emphasises the links between the violation of human rights and violence against women, including buying sex, and women's sexual and reproductive health rights. Women's reproductive

rights are called into question even in the Nordic countries. The legal right to abortion is challenged in many places, and new restrictions on women's rights are being imposed, which leads to restricted access to treatment and medicines for reproductive health.

### **WE DEMAND THAT:**

- \* **Funds be allocated to gender-specific research and knowledge-building on how diseases affect women, including menstruation and related disorders, to support for women with cancer diagnoses (particularly breast and female reproductive cancer), and to well-supported measures, including preventive care and treatment of women's diseases.**
- \* **The Nordic governments and responsible authorities ensure gender equality in the diagnosis, investigation, treatment and monitoring of diseases with respect to the specific needs of different groups. Customised health care for women with disabilities is necessary.**
- \* **Healthcare and judicial systems take women's experiences of unwanted sexual acts, abuse and violence seriously and guarantee respect for the individual's integrity and legal rights.**
- \* **The Nordic governments and responsible authorities guarantee compulsory sex education of good quality, access to modern contraceptives, access to legal and safe abortions, as well as safe pregnancies and care during delivery, with respect for every woman's wishes and needs.**
- \* **The Nordic authorities fulfil their important commitment to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, SRHR, including LHBTQ and surrogate motherhood questions in the health-related Millennium Development Goals and in the post-2015 agenda.**

# 3. Women at work, equal pay, education and career

**The Beijing Platform for Action** requires extensive efforts on the part of governments to promote women's economic independence. A basic requirement is to be able to support oneself. Women have fewer opportunities than men to achieve this. Some of the causes are differences in labour force participation, working conditions, wages and pension benefits. Fewer women than men are gainfully employed and a higher proportion of women work part-time – the degree of which varies in the Nordic countries.

Involuntary part-time work is a female phenomenon. Part-time is the norm in typically female shift-based occupations, such as nursing and care, hotel and retail and other service professions, contrary to male shift-based occupations. The proportion of women working part-time or in precarious employment, such as hourly employment, temporary and fixed-term contracts has increased in recent years. Another reason for the lower economic independence is that a large proportion of the female workforce is employed in low-wage occupations. The difficulty of reconciling paid work with having a family and caring for a family also affects women more than men. Women's anticipated high use of parental leave leads to so-called statistical wage discrimination against all women.

Wage discrepancies between men and women have remained stable at about 15 percent for the past 20–30 years, calculated based on converting part-time work to full-time work. The Nordic countries are far from achieving equal pay. In an international comparison, women in Nordic countries participate to a larger extent in the work force as a result of public contributions to childcare and care for sick and the elderly. As such, it is of utmost importance to strengthen and preserve these policies. The majority of poor pensioners in the Nordic countries are women. Moreover today's young women can expect low pensions due to continued low income, more absence from work and shorter participation in the labour market, due to the way the pension system is constructed.

Women pursue education to a higher degree than men and constitute the majority of today's university graduates. Studies show that women's wages are lower when compared to those of men with an equi-

valent education, which is explained by so-called value discrimination. The UN CEDAW Committee has repeatedly criticised the fact that women's higher education has not led to a level playing field for advancement, whether in academia or in the labour market in general.

## WE DEMAND THAT:

- \* **Women's rights to equal pay and career opportunities be strengthened and their ability to support themselves significantly improved through tangible structural measures. The Nordic governments, employer organisations and trade unions work to establish working conditions that take family life and actual labour market conditions into account and create decent working conditions. The right to full-time employment be guaranteed by law or by agreements in countries where women's unwanted part-time work is a widespread problem. The option of voluntary part-time employment be granted and insecure employment, such as hourly and temporary employment, be regulated to avoid abuse.**
- \* **The Nordic governments prioritise structural interventions so that financial independence after retirement is assured.**
- \* **The Nordic governments implement a parental leave system that leads to equal sharing of childcare responsibility between men and women and guarantee high quality public childcare and elderly care.**
- \* **Responsible authorities ensure that teaching materials are quality-assured from a gender perspective and that active measures be taken to alter gender-stereotypical educational choices and training options in order to change the gender-segregated labour market.**
- \* **The Nordic governments prioritise women's access to research careers. Different funding initiatives for centres of excellence must not divert funding from female-dominated education and research areas. Women's educational choices, regardless of specialisation, should be guaranteed equivalent resources.**

# 4. Violence against women and girls

**Sexual harassment**, psychological and physical violence, rape, incest, control, threats, genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-related violence, pornography, prostitution, trafficking in women and murder are words that describe the wide-ranging criminal acts committed against women and girls worldwide. Violence against women is a human rights issue, a democracy issue, a gender equality issue, a criminal and a public health issue. In other words, a major social problem in the Nordic region.

Violence against women and girls is a consequence of the patriarchal structures of power, which reflect fundamental views of femininity and masculinity and sexuality overall. We are concerned about the fact that the Nordic countries have moved towards the use of terminologies and approaches that are gender neutral. Preventing violence before it occurs, has not received

enough attention, neither in the Nordic region or internationally.

The sex industry's aggressiveness and organised criminal trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation are threats to democracy and the freedom of expression as well as to women's legal rights. In the Nordic countries there are an increasing number of foreign-born women in prostitution. The disparity between ambitious political goals and the structure for implementation is cause for concern. Many perpetrators escape without punishment while the society's help and protection for victims of violence are lacking.

Women in the care sectors are often subjected to violence while exercising their profession, due to, among other things, a lack of security routines and staff.

## WE DEMAND THAT:

- \* The Nordic governments ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). Police and judiciary personnel be educated on violence against women, and resources be allocated to crime prevention and prosecution.
- \* Every Nordic country appoint an independent national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings who works closely with the civil society, particularly with women's organisations.
- \* The Nordic governments strengthen organisations that work for women's right to freedom from violence and provide adequate and predictable resources, particularly to women's refuges/shelters. Long-term, comprehensive action plans, with clearly established goals and adequate resources are needed to prevent gender violence, reduce men's violence against women and protect vulnerable women.
- \* Nordic authorities focus on the root causes of violence and abuse. We propose national campaigns with a preventive focus, whereby the society shows zero tolerance towards violence and the subordination of women, and work to counteract blame and shame. The fundamental causes of violence and abuse and the reasons why women enter prostitution must be integral parts of the campaign. Information on human rights and support structures must be guaranteed to women subjected to violence. Rape shall be defined as the absence of consent.
- \* The Nordic governments prepare legislation on the prevention of violence against women and girls, including the criminalisation of the purchase of sex where such a law does not already exist, develop strong exit strategies to enable persons to leave prostitution and reinforce the capacity of the police and the judiciary to prosecute sex purchasers, procurers and members of organised crime.
- \* The Nordic governments recognise the specific needs of particularly vulnerable women, who are subjected to violence and abuse. Women with serious mental health and/or drug problems and who are subjected to abuse lack equal access to women's shelters, and shelters are not sufficiently adapted to women with disabilities.

# 5. Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development

**Environmental and climate change** are the greatest challenges that the world faces. Men and women affect and are affected by environmental and climate change in different ways. Reinforced action on the environment and climate change presupposes a gender perspective and women's active involvement, according to the Beijing Platform for Action.

Environmental and climate change impact a number of areas. Floods, droughts and other natural disasters affect people in poor countries hardest and reinforce already existing disparities. Add to this that women, who constitute the majority of the world's poor, will be the hardest hit. Today, 780 million people lack adequate water and 842 million people suffer from malnutrition. All this leads to migration, climate refugees and human trafficking.

Women must be involved in defining needs, discussing solutions and participating in decision-making. Research on the consequences of climate change for women must be prioritised. All issues about food production and access to food, water and energy to the management of resources, transport and technological innovations that reduce environmental damage require the participation of women in order to be solved. So far, women have been under-represented in all areas and at all levels of political and decision-making processes moving towards sustainable development. The responsibility to deal with poisoned food, nutrition during pregnancy, children's exposure to artificial, unhealthy chemicals rests with the individual woman rather than with those who are responsible for the emissions. A safe environment must be secured.

Women should be included because they have other perspectives and experiences with which to contribute. Women are important in the quest for sustainable solutions to environmental and climatic challenges.

Nordiskt Forum's hypothesis is that sustainable development requires a holistic approach with an integrated gender perspective based on ecological, economic and social conditions.

## WE DEMAND THAT:

- \* **Nordic authorities contribute to women playing active roles as innovators, organisers, teachers, leaders and ambassadors for sustainable development. Climate and environmental development aid must always, where relevant, include a gender perspective.**
- \* **Women be secured greater political participation and decision-making roles in environmental and climate work, and have at least 50 percent representation in negotiations on climate and environmental agreements.**
- \* **Nordic authorities ensure the right of Sami people, especially Sami women, to be heard on environmental issues in their regions.**
- \* **Nordic authorities implement stronger measures, including legislation, to speed up the reduction of harmful emissions, which are often unnecessary and costly, and ensure that the energy consumed increasingly come from renewable and sustainable energy sources.**
- \* **The Nordic governments and authorities, together with private industry assume responsibility for demonstrating the impacts of environmental pollutants, chemicals and other emissions on the society and that the effects on women are considered in legislation and in the development of a green economy and green workplaces.**
- \* **Women's sexual and reproductive rights be protected during environmental and climate-related crises and that violence against and trafficking of women and children during natural disasters be exposed and prevented.**



# 6. Care Work and Welfare Society

**Many Western countries** have made major cuts to their welfare systems, which has affected the health and welfare of the most vulnerable in the society. Welfare cuts are particularly damaging to women. When institutions do not offer individuals the care they need, the responsibility to provide care falls on the immediate family. Frequently, women become responsible for the care of children, the sick and the elderly. Women perform the largest part of the unpaid household and care work.

Women are the majority of employees in the care and welfare sectors. Cuts affect employees when demands for savings are met with unstable employment, shared work-shifts and tight work schedules. Administrative functions in the healthcare sector are also reduced, leaving highly educated and specialised professions to take over their functions. Political decisions are limited to formulating requirements for monitoring and quality control, based on various models such as New Public Management, without examining how realistic or effective these are.

The high level of sick leave among women employed in the welfare sector requires action. With a consistent gender perspective, the main challenges can be pinpointed and solutions can be found to promote the health and well being of the employees. The Nordic countries need to exchange experiences on functional models to reduce sick leave and work-related injuries in the welfare sector.

Nordic countries are increasingly multicultural and the welfare system must be able to cope with the diverse needs of the population. Another challenge is the increasing life expectancy and its effects on women and men and on our society. An important aspect is that women live longer, under worse living conditions than men. It is obvious that the care of patients with incurable age-related diseases will require major efforts on the part of the state and local authorities but also on the part of families where it is often women who bear the burden.

## WE DEMAND THAT:

- \* **The Nordic governments prioritise good working conditions and the health of employees in the welfare sector. Employees with a lower level of training and unlicensed employees are given the opportunity to undertake further training.**
- \* **The Nordic governments emphasise the importance of increasing men's participation in health services and care work, both the unpaid work in the home and paid work in the health and welfare sectors.**
- \* **Nordic governments prioritise education and research on the demographic shift towards a higher proportion of elderly people in the population, invest in both technical and organisational innovations and demand consistent gender mainstreaming.**
- \* **Authorities and other institutions are given the task of creating programs on how to use technological advances to improve public health. Particular consideration is given to the needs of vulnerable groups and, based on respect for the dignity of the individual, assistance is provided in order for the elderly to live independently as long as possible.**

# 7. Peace and security

**The Beijing Platform** for Action calls for the participation of women in conflict resolution at the decision-making level. It calls for non-violence and the promotion of a culture of peace. During the past decade, the role of Nordic countries in international conflicts has changed from being leaders in peacekeeping operations and peace negotiations to increasingly focusing on military action in international crisis management.

The Nordic governments see themselves as powerful promoters of women's participation in peace processes in the context of foreign policy, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security. But in reality, women remain excluded from formal peace negotiations and decision-making processes.

Based on Resolution 1325, the UN has focused its work on women as victims and appointed a Special Representative. Perpetrators of sexual violence and gender-based violence during war often escape punishment, even though such acts are recognised by the international community as a cynical tactic of war, as a war crime and, in some cases, as a crime against humanity and genocide. Sexual violence is part of a war strategy and should be dealt with as such. The medical and psychosocial needs of women and girls who have been sexually abused during war are rarely prioritised. Women and girls also suffer from rape, forced marriage, forced pregnancies, torture, trafficking, sexual slavery and intentional transmission of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, both during and after armed conflicts. These significant challenges must be dealt with and regulated by the international community.

We need to explore and develop democratic means for peace and security and ways for women to control their own lives. Violence against women in war reflects a general culture of violence. We need to redefine sustainable peace as the presence of security, justice and equality rather than as the absence of war. Sustainable peace is when people have sufficient resources to live in dignity, free of hardship and fear. We must reclaim the importance of peace.

## WE DEMAND THAT:

- \* **The Nordic governments ensure the equal representation of women at the decision-making level in all peace processes, to prevent war, mediate in conflicts, monitor peace processes and participate in peace negotiations. The Nordic governments request that the United Nations appoint a Special Representative, responsible for promoting the right of women to be actors and decision-makers in peace and security issues.**
- \* **The Nordic governments revise, make explicit and strengthen their action plans for Resolution 1325, earmarking financial resources and promoting the participation of the civil society, especially women's organisations cooperating in the Nordic region, to achieve the goals.**
- \* **The Nordic governments allocate funds to protect and train women refugees and increase their efforts to strengthen institutions and structures to prosecute and punish perpetrators of sexual violence during war. Victims receive active support.**
- \* **The Nordic governments take indigenous people and the environment into account in peace and security issues.**
- \* **The Nordic governments promote peace initiatives, decrease military expenditure, stop selling arms that largely affect women and children, appoint disarmament ambassadors and reinforce their active efforts to abolish nuclear weapons.**

# 8. Political participation and community development

**Women's empowered** and independent participation, as well as the improvement of women's social, economic and political status are essential for developing democratic citizenship. These are crucial for sustainable development in all areas of life. Women in the Nordic countries are highly represented in the directly elected political institutions. However, surveys show that women's representation is drastically reduced in positions that are appointed through internal selection.

The goals on gender equality formulated in the Beijing Platform for Action note that development and peace cannot be achieved solely with equal representation. This also requires the active participation of women in all decision-making and implementation, and that a gender perspective be incorporated at all levels. Only then can the composition of the population be reflected.

Dropout from political assignments is more common among women elected representatives than among men. The conditions of decision-making and forms of political work are important to ensure women's full participation. The Nordic women's movement calls for a holistic and proactive approach to make the commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action a reality.

Women in politics have testified about various types of mockery, indifference and harassment. This is democratically unacceptable. Even the media coverage of women in politics has been criticised for being gender-stereotypical. It is important that women are represented in all areas of society. Areas where women have traditionally long been involved, such as primary education and health care, should receive adequate resources considering their critical role in society. This means that gender budgeting is required at the national and local levels.

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- \* **The Nordic governments set clear goals for women's real opportunity to exercise their citizenship, paying attention to the needs of and measures directed at vulnerable groups. Authorities prioritise work against cyber hate and the harassment of women politicians and other women in the public sphere.**
- \* **Political assemblies and state, regional and municipal committees, commissions, working groups and delegations ensure, for example by introducing quotas, equal representation for women and men.**
- \* **State authorities, local government, media and business-related bodies invite women as experts without being swayed by gender-stereotypical perceptions regarding the assignment's subject matter. Women in minority groups are heard as experts.**
- \* **Women be represented at the local level and included in horizontal decision-making in all sectors, including finance and business.**
- \* **Labour market organisations take responsibility for appointing more women to senior management positions, in trade unions, employers associations and member organisations.**
- \* **All recruitment procedures, election committees and other selection bodies use clear criteria that do not discriminate against women. Political mentoring programs are initiated to increase women's participation in politics and to reduce the number of dropouts.**

# 9. Gender mainstreaming and gender equal activities

**Gender mainstreaming** is a strategy to achieve a gender equal society and one that permeates the Beijing Platform for Action. The strategy ensures that the needs and experiences of women and men form the basis for policy decisions, institutional structures and resource allocation in an equal manner.

Gender mainstreaming is a proactive approach that aims not only to correct but also to prevent the emergence of inequality between women and men. The strategy counteracts the negative effects of gender-blindness, which is usually called gender neutrality, but which in practice often means that men's experiences form the basis for decision-making.

Gender mainstreaming entails that gender equality and gender perspectives are included in all policies, at all levels and at all stages of decision-making and implementation, in order for women and men to have equal conditions. The strategy challenges structural discrimination and women's subordinate position in decision-making. The strategy aims to achieve identified national gender equality goals and international commitments regarding political and administrative processes.

The implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy has not been sufficiently systematic and has been too slow to implement in the Nordic countries. The Nordic governments' gender mainstreaming efforts vary, with often weak to moderate but occasionally significant success.

There are many good examples of gender mainstreaming at the national and local levels. However, these are not applied to other similar activities and results are not sufficiently allowed to affect general decisions relating to different areas of society. Higher education and training has not integrated the experience and knowledge derived from gender mainstreaming.

## WE DEMAND THAT:

- \* The Nordic governments define the division of responsibility for gender mainstreaming and anchor and specify gender mainstreaming in national laws, regulations and processes across all its policies, including appeal procedures, and adopt and fund specific measures for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming.
- \* Government agencies be mandated to include a gender equality perspective in all of their activities and to properly implement gender mainstreaming, which entails training of all relevant personnel, gender budgeting and other policy processes, gender equality analyses, as well as mechanisms and procedures for monitoring.
- \* The Nordic governments formulate action plans with guidelines, criteria, indicators, measures, key performance indicators and gender-disaggregated data and statistics. Regular analyses are carried out, recorded and published.
- \* The Nordic governments use gender mainstreaming in all international commitments, including the post-2015 agenda and sustainable development goals, SDG.
- \* The Nordic governments use gender mainstreaming in all international commitments, including in the post-2015 agenda.
- \* Private sector employers integrate a gender perspective in their operations.

# 10. Asylum and Migration

**Globalisation means** that more and more people move between different countries for different reasons and under different conditions. The Nordic countries admit, for example, quota refugees, refugees and others in need of protection, unaccompanied minors, families, students, migrant workers and undocumented persons.

One reason for women to seek asylum in the Nordic countries is that they have been persecuted due to their gender. These women are victims of violations of fundamental human rights and even death threats. They are women who have been sold, exploited and subjected to inhumane cruelty and torture, raped, forced to marry as children or otherwise abused, or they are women who have argued in favour of girls' education, sought a divorce or are gay. It should be clarified how women's asylum claims are acknowledged in the Nordic countries' asylum processes and to what extent women are granted international protection because they have been persecuted and demand their rights. It is a fact that women lack knowledge about their rights and which laws apply for marriage, the rights of children, and rights applicable in case of violence and abuse.

Each year, several thousand women come to the Nordic region with a residence permit on the basis of family ties. The residence permit is temporary and connected to a partner. Permanent residence requires that the woman has stayed lawfully in the country and lived with her partner for a certain amount of time - two to five years depending on the country. Some of these women are subjected to violence and forced to leave the relationship before they can obtain permanent residency and then risk being extradited and, in some cases, losing custody of their children. It is important to investigate how common it is that men repeatedly exploit women in this manner and that women are deported for leaving a relationship.

People seeking work in different countries are employed in increasingly diverging conditions. Human trafficking is not only for sexual exploitation but also

for work. Women often leave their own children in their home countries to increase their income in the short or the long term. Women's vulnerability as household workers has been acknowledged, but interventions to protect their labour rights are lacking. Those who live as undocumented migrants are particularly vulnerable, as they are not covered by social safety nets.

## WE DEMAND THAT:

- \* **The Nordic countries recognise women's asylum claims and become frontrunners in protecting women through clear gender-sensitive guidelines on women's asylum grounds. All women who are in need of protection should be treated equally. Information on women's rights will be provided as well as information on where women can seek help in the event of vulnerability.**
- \* **Women with family connection permits are granted their own residence permits that are not tied to men. The deportation of victims of abuse is stopped. Women subjected to trafficking are given protection and assistance, whether or not they are able or want to bear witness in criminal proceedings.**
- \* **The Nordic governments and authorities implement a humane refugee policy with particular consideration given to women refugees, in accordance with the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.**
- \* **Governments and authorities improve integration and training of foreign-born women with poor education levels. Illiteracy is prioritised in the educational system.**
- \* **Migrant workers and labour immigrants are guaranteed equal pay and employment conditions as native employees.**

# 11. New Technology and Media

**Women are less visible** in the media than men. Research shows that women make up 30 percent of the persons seen and heard in the news. This situation has changed very little over the past two decades despite this fact being explicitly raised by the Beijing Platform for Action. It is still men who tell the news and are the news. Men are predominant among experts whereas women express themselves as the general public. The influence of women in the media must increase in order for women's voices from across the society to be heard.

Equal participation and representation of women in the media is vital for democratic discourse.

The media is a cornerstone of the democratic society in the Nordic region and in the world. We must secure freedom of the press and of expression and, at the same time, counteract stereotypical representations of women and women's issues and who writes about what.

The media landscape is becoming increasingly diverse, and new technology has changed the way we present and consume news. Women can now create their own media and write and blog about topics that interest them. Social media offers great opportunities for citizens to participate in public discourse. At the same time, there is a negative tendency that the rapid technological progress increases the differences between women and men's participation. Moreover, discussions on the Internet are unregulated and can be spiteful. During the past decade, women who write on the Internet and participate in discussions in social media, on blogs and other online forums meet increasing hostility and harassment. This organised, sexist harassment threatens the empowerment of women and is a way to silence women's voices in the public sphere.

We have to discuss how we can balance freedom of expression with the right to privacy and the regulation of sexist hate speech. Cyber hate has both short and long-term harmful effects on women's quality of life and mental health and weakens the potential for

active participation in society. Women who take on a public role are more exposed to phenomena such as bad language and outright threats. Some women have been exposed to physical violence. This is a threat to democracy and freedom and to women's legal rights.

## WE DEMAND THAT:

- \* **The Nordic governments develop annual media barometers that give tangible proof of the participation of women in the media in terms of recruitment, management, content, perspective, etc.**
- \* **State-controlled media be given the task to develop gender equality by implementing a model for participation and non-stereotypical representation that can also be used by private media actors.**
- \* **Educational authorities and media training programs as well as teacher training programs implement initiatives so that young people in the Nordic countries become more socially-aware media consumers, as media literacy is essential for active citizenship.**
- \* **Nordic legislation enforce prohibitions against sexist advertising and that the advertising industry be obligated to provide information on any airbrushing of images, because advertisements build on and reinforce gender-stereotyped roles that have a negative effect, particularly on young people.**
- \* **The Nordic governments prepare more effective prosecutions of violations in social media and set up an independent complaints body to deal with discrimination against women and girls in the media.**

# 12. Future of feminism in the Nordic countries and the organisation of women's movement

**The women's movement** has always consisted of different groups of women who have raised specific issues of importance to them at different times. As far back as a hundred years ago, women fought for suffrage, health, better housing, union demands, the portrayal of women in media, the right to education, equal pay, peace and sexual rights. In fact, the current women's movement is still working on the same issues, many of which have led to results that are now an established part of the society. The women's movement is a strong and important voice in society that has achieved remarkable success over the years. It has changed structures and improved living conditions for women.

Different voices and efforts are still needed. The women's movement has always chosen different organisational forms and practices, from extra-parliamentary actions to political parties, but its strength has always been to unite and work together on specific demands. A continued and strengthened cooperation between generations of feminists and between women's groups working on specific social issues is crucial to achieving a gender equal society. For a progressive development of the organisation of the women's movement and the future of feminism in the Nordic countries, it is important to include various groups and interests and to formulate common demands. The women's movement must actively discuss differences and stand up for each other in solidarity.

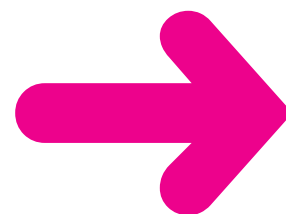
Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014 – New Action on Women's Rights is proof of the determination of Nordic women's movements not to accept a decline in women's conditions of life but to work for a better future. It is also proof of the solid support for women's and men's equal value and rights.

The political consensus on the importance of gender equality is not a problem that disarms women's movements, but an opportunity to stimulate grass root movements and initiate well-founded discus-

sions based on alternative social solutions. Gender equality policy focuses on women and men, girls and boys. It is guided by the national gender equality policy objectives and international commitments such as the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Other policy areas – everything from integration, disabilities, and welfare policy to labour market, industrial policy, education, the environment, and taxes - are still not sufficiently based on gender equality. Enhanced gender mainstreaming, men's involvement and the cooperation between different sectors are therefore necessary.

The roads to a common goal are many and different forms of work and organisations will continue to be encouraged, but we also emphasise that established women's organisations, guided by the human rights perspective, have historically been effective in fighting for women's rights. Together we are working to achieve a gender equal and feminist society!

Nordiskt Forum emphasises that international agreements such as the CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Security Council Resolution on women, peace and security, the commitments of the Millennium Goals and the future Sustainable Development Goals are only successful in improving women's position in society through the cooperation of a strong and energetic women's movement along with gender equality work that permeates all sectors of society .



## **WE DEMAND THAT:**

- \* The Nordic governments finance the organisations of the women's movement at least on a par with other organisations in civil society so that feminism has an impact and true gender equality is attained in society.**
- \* The Nordic governments ensure higher participation of women's organisations, as dialogue partners, as critical reviewers and as actors of change in developing a transparent policy of gender equality, building on a holistic perspective. We wish for a long-term engagement in sustainable development both at the national and global levels.**
- \* In accordance with the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, women's organisations and civil society networks are given economic and social opportunities to participate in policy formulations at the local, national and international level.**
- \* The Nordic governments support, financially and otherwise, collaboration between the organisations of the women's movement at the Nordic level.**
- \* The Nordic governments commission the women's organisations to make the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action known to the public and show their consequences for policy-making.**
- \* Nordiskt Forum along with our cooperating organisations, networks and individuals are committed to creating conditions for solidarity so that the rights of all women are covered. It is a struggle to reveal and change power structures that oppress women and to remove stereotypical roles of women, so that we are free to transform the society and our own lives.**



